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Based upon a case study of over 20 demonstration centers created by the Illinois department of education during the period 1963-65, a conceptual scheme was developed for the analysis of State control in education. The case study defined 10 State policies, examined State implementation efforts, and identified instances of State action affecting local decisions. Devices utilized by the State to influence local decisions included guidelines, contracts, consultants, training programs, conferences, and reports. A survey of over 60 local personnel, the State staff, and State records indicated widespread compliance with State policy. Content analysis of interviewee responses confirmed that State control can be viewed in terms of the French-Raven influence model according to five types of power: Reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert. Seven conditions were identified as related to the use of State power resources in control relationships: (1) Developmental factors within the overall program, (2) the substantive character of the decision, (3) personality factors, (4) availability of power resources, (5) time and space constraints, (6) the suitability of various types of power to individual schools, and (7) feedback about the effects of previous applications of power. (JK)

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STATE POWER AND LOCAL DECISION-MAKING IN EDUCATION*

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Today I shall report on a study[1] which generated a set of concepts and propositions applicable to the analysis of state control of local schools. I use the term "state control" to refer to actions by a state department of education which have a measurable impact on the behavior of individuals in local school systems.

The study was inspired by the observation that there simply isn't any theory which satisfactorily identifies and explains the conditions under which local schools respond to state direction. The absence of such theory vitiates efforts to strengthen state education agencies[2] and it leaves unexplained a factor (the state) which presumably affects schools in important ways. Proposals for strengthening the states typically are based on principles of administration which are derived from tradition and from logic rather than from any empirically-based understanding of how states influence local affairs. Often the proposals are contradictory. The few empirical studies which have been conducted have not succeeded in describing the variables associated with control, nor the relationships among the variables, nor the conditions of their existence.[3]

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*A paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Division A, February 8, 1969, Los Angeles.

[1]David L. Colton, "State Power and Local Decision-Making in Education," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1968).

[2]Among the many indications of interest in strengthening the states, two stand out. One was the book by James B. Conant, Shaping Educational Policy (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964); the Education Commission of the States was a direct outgrowth of this book. A second indicator is Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; the Title provides virtually unrestricted grants to the states for the purpose of strengthening state education agencies.

[3]Most of the research on state education agencies describes the agencies without reference to their impact on schools. The few studies which have examined impact have failed to identify the variables affecting control. For example, see John Guy Fowlkes and George E. Watson, School Finance and Local Planning (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1957), p. 80. Overall there has been virtually no response to Chase's recommendation that there be "more rigorous testing of arrangements [at the state level] in terms of their effects." Francis S. Chase and Robert E. Sweitzer, "State Governments and Education," Review of Educational Research, XXII (October, 1952), 353.

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The study reported here sought to develop an empirically-based conceptual scheme for the analysis of state control in education. Because of the impoverished condition of theory in the area of state-local relations in education, a substantive case design was chosen for this study. Such a design gave promise of generating operational concepts and tentative propositions which could contribute to theory.[1]

The two key prerequisites to conducting a substantive case study are first, some frame of reference, and second, a situation to study. The general frame of reference employed in this study was taken from Herbert Simon's early work on decision-making.[2] Simon notes that administrators are effective to the extent that they alter the premises on which workers base their decisions. In these terms, state control can be construed as a process in which the state affects the decisional premises of local school personnel. Thus the task of this study was to specify decisional premises in a theoretically-useful way, and to show how the state influences decisional premises at the local level.

The second prerequisite of a substantive case--finding a topic for study--was met by focusing upon a project in which the Illinois department of education created some two dozen demonstration centers during the period 1963-65.[3] These demonstration centers were subject to specific state policies which usually required some modifications of established patterns of local behavior and hence provided a suitable subject for exploration.

The Case

The first task of the case study was to describe state policies, to examine the state's efforts to implement its policies, and to identify instances in which state action affected local decisions regarding the policies. The following ten policies were described:

> The content of demonstrations should (a) be unique to the geographic areas served by the center, (b) be socially significant, (c) emphasize higher level thought processes, (d) be constantly improving, (e) include sound procedures for selecting the study population to be served, and (f) be exportable to other schools.
>
> Every demonstration center should have a full-time project director.
>
> Demonstration teachers and demonstration center project directors should be trained (primarily at institutes offered by the University of Illinois and funded by the state).

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[1] Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (Chicago: Aldine, 1967)

[2] Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (2nd ed., New York: The Free Press, 1957).

[3] The demonstration project was a component of the comprehensive Illinois Plan for Program Development for Gifted Children. During 1963-65, when the Plan was initiated, demonstration funds amounted to $1,300,000 of the total $6,750,000 appropriated for the total Illinois Plan.

Local project directors, administrators, teachers, and communities should understand and support not only the program being demonstrated but also the demonstration process itself.

State funds should be expended in terms of the contracts negotiated by local schools and the state and in terms of the budget guidelines and regulations promulgated by the state.

Programs being demonstrated should be regularly and systematically evaluated, and the results made available to visitors.

Each demonstration center should solicit visitors.

The significant elements of demonstrations should be made visible to visitors.

Visitors should have an opportunity to visit privately with students from demonstration classes.

Every center should provide follow-up services to nearby schools.

The state utilized a number of devices to induce local decisions which would conform to the state's policies. Guidelines were formulated and used by the state department of education; these guidelines were to be utilized by local personnel who were writing proposals for the operation of demonstration centers. Successful proposals were incorporated in contracts in which local schools agreed to follow through on their proposals and to submit regular reports in exchange for receipt of state funds. A staff of state consultants provided supervision and assistance for the demonstration centers. In addition the state established formal training programs for demonstration center personnel; the programs included some local in-service institutes conducted by the state consultants and major summer institutes in 1964 and 1965. A series of conferences for demonstration center personnel and state staff members provided forums for the exchange of ideas, information, and problems. Finally, the state used a reporting system which required local schools to submit information about their programs and problems.

In order to obtain data on local compliance with state policies, the demonstration centers were visited, some sixty local personnel were interviewed, the state staff was interviewed, and all official papers and informal documents available at the state level were examined. The data showed that there was widespread compliance with state policy. For example, virtually all of the centers chose to demonstrate programs which satisfied the state's criteria for program content. Compliance with the policy requiring full-time project directors rose from 20% of the centers in 1963-64 to 58% in 1964-65 and then to 95% in 1965-66. All of the centers sent personnel to the special summer institutes offered by the state. Several of the centers gave evidence of high commitment to the state program. The centers expended funds in a manner consistent with the contracts and with budget regulations. Compliance with the state's policy requiring program evaluation was relatively low; perhaps this was because the state did not pursue the policy very vigorously. Every school made efforts to solicit visitors. Every center permitted classroom visitation by visitors. Nearly all centers adopted (albeit unenthusiastically) the practice of allowing visitors to interview students.

Toward the end of the biennium all of the centers formally committed themselves to offering follow-up services to nearby schools. Available evidence indicated that it was state influence, rather than some other factor, which accounted for a substantial part of local decisions to comply with state policy.

A Typology of State Power

The findings which I wish to emphasize today are based primarily on interviews with local school personnel. The interview questions focused upon local decisions which conformed to state policy. The interviews yielded more than 400 statements in which local personnel revealed how they responded to state action.

The statements were subjected to a content analysis in order to discover a useful conceptual typology. A number of typologies, including those of Simon, Dahl and Lindblom, and Parsons, were rejected because they did not fit the data adequately.[1] However a typology developed by French and Raven did fit the data.[2] I was able to fit most of the 400 statements into the typology, and five graduate students working independently achieved reasonable agreement with each other and with me about the proper assignment of items.

The French-Raven typology suggests that influence occurs when a person attributes power to someone else. In their laboratory studies, French and Raven identified five types of power: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power. French and Raven found one or more of these power attributions in situations in which one person influenced another. I found them in situations in which the state influenced decision-makers in local schools.

Reward power was attributed to the state in data which indicated that local decisions were affected by anticipation of rewards from the state, by state reinforcement of local decisions, or by state support for local activities. Attributes of the state which were associated with reward power were money, expertise, praise, and intrinsic satisfactions stemming from participation in the state program. The following statements, which were extracted from statements about state-local interaction, are illustrative of the many which reflected reward power:

> We had no trouble getting teachers involved. . . . It became a sort of prestige thing, probably because of the amount of attention they were getting. Visitors brought attention. Teachers got to travel, went to conferences. And university professors were paying attention to the feedback from teachers.
>
> --local director

> [The consultants] always gave us a shot in the arm. They created a climate of amounting to something.
>
> --local administrator

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[1] Simon, op. cit., chaps. v-xi. Talcott Parsons, "On the Concept of Influence," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXVII (Spring, 1953), 37-62. Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, Politics, Economics, and Welfare (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), pp. 93-126.

[2] John R. P. French, Jr., and Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," Studies in Social Power, ed. Dorwin Cartwright (Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan, 1959), pp. 150-167.

The state's coercive power was manifested in decisions attributed to local efforts to avoid unpleasant consequences which could be imposed by the state, as in the following case:

> The local administration did not like the idea of service to other districts. [The state] put it on an "or else" basis during the negotiations. We took it.
>
> --local director

Coercive power was also evident in the arousal of local anxiety, as in the following comment:

> At the summer institute . . . I remember getting back my first lesson plan . . . with the note that "a double-jointed contortionist couldn't follow this lesson plan." You get a couple of these back and it makes you sit back and think a bit. What happened was that they created a lot of anxiety and frustration. We got to a point where we didn't know what we were doing. When we reached this point they guided us to a new way of doing things.
>
> --demonstration teacher

Sources of coercive power were the state's ability to discontinue centers, the state's ability to withhold reimbursement for inappropriate expenditures, and critical comments from state personnel.

Legitimate power was reflected in local perceptions of the "rightness" of state actions, and in the related feeling that local personnel were obligated to comply with state directives. This power appeared to rest on cultural norms which could be activated by the state; such norms included deference to law and its derivatives, deference to office or status, a sense of reciprocity, and feelings of propriety. Illustrative statements of legitimate power follow:

> We felt obligated to accept visitors, because we were getting funds.
>
> --demonstration teacher

> The job description which [the state] provided in the fall of 1964 helped. It spelled out what needed to be done. When the superintendent saw it he felt obligated.
>
> --local director

Referent power was evident in local decisions which were based on emulation of state personnel and upon feelings of identification with other participants in the state program. The major sources of referent power were the charismatic personality of the state coordinator, the development of group feelings among personnel from the various centers, and the growing sense of involvement in the state program. Indications of referent power took a number of forms:

> [The state coordinator] has a deep sense of commitment to this idea. Because of that you begin to feel one too. . . . When someone you respect attaches so much value to a role, you do too.
>
> --local director

> [At the summer institute] you're all sweating out the same thing. Then somewhere you reveal some of your frustrations, and find someone else has the same ones. There are enough people around to provide models of how to do it. So eventually you do it.
>
> --local director

Expert power was evident in decisions in which the state provided the cognitive elements, i.e. the ideas or the information on which decisions were based, as in the following comments:

> The idea for using creativity tests came out of the summer institutes.
>
> --local director

> As we attended some of the meetings it became quite evident that there was more to it than . . . just showing people around the school. . . . The changes were basically in the process--interviewing the kids . . . and giving people free time on their own without anybody being around.
>
> --local director

The major conclusion of this study, then, is that state control can be viewed in terms of the French-Raven influence model. State influence is a dyadic relationship involving power resources at the state level and perceptions of these resources at the local level. Local perceptions of the state's reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power become bases for local decision-making.

The Utilization of State Power Resources

As the study progressed it became evident that the state's power resources were unequally distributed among influence relationships; one type of power resource would characterize some control situations whereas other types of power resources appeared in other control relationships. Apparently power resources were patterned or orchestrated in terms of some underlying conditions or rules. Seven such conditions were tentatively identified and then explained in terms of available theory:

1. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to developmental factors within the overall program. That is, certain types of power are utilized at one point in time and other types are utilized at other times. For example in the early months of the program reward power and expert power predominated. As the program matured, legitimate power and coercive power became more prevalent. Referent power did not become important until after state and local personnel had had numerous opportunities to interact with each other. Expert power dwindled in importance; as local personnel accepted state ideas, the state's stock of expertise was in effect "used up."

In part such fluctuations may have reflected the dynamics of the process by which innovations are adopted. Awareness, trial, and institutionalization may each require different forms of power. Some of the fluctuation was also due to the statutory basis of the Illinois Plan; the state's reward power and coercive power appear to have been linked to the two-year cycle of demonstration center contracts.

2. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to the substantive character of the decision that is induced at the local level. For example local decisions about the content of demonstrations were heavily influenced by reward power and by expert power, whereas the employment of full-time directors was linked primarily with legitimate power and coercive power. Evidence of commitment to the state program was associated primarily with indications of referent power.

Power differentiations associated with the substantive character of state policies were partially explained in terms of observability and clarity. In cases where local compliance was readily observable there may have been a tendency to use power resources whose effects are short-term whereas low observability may have necessitated power resources (e.g. referent power) which produce cognitive or affective re-structuring of a more permanent nature. Policies varied in terms of their clarity to local personnel; in cases where clarity was low, expert power may have been a prerequisite to compliance.

3. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to personality factors among state personnel. Local personnel characterized the coordinator of the program primarily in terms of expert power and referent power. In contrast, one of the directors of the state program usually was associated with legitimate power and with coercive power. State consultants wielded expert power and reward power. To some extent, of course, these differences reflected differences in office; however, the evidence also suggested that differences were related to the personal styles of the personnel involved at the state level.

4. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to the availability of power resources. The state could apply only those power resources which were available, whether or not they were adequate to the task at hand. For example, expertise was clearly called for in order to obtain compliance with the policy requiring program evaluation, but the state simply didn't have much expertise in this area. Therefore the state had to rely on legitimate power and reward power. On the other hand, availability of power resources generated forces for their utilization. In the first biennium, for example, money was plentiful; the state granted contracts which were much larger than those of the second biennium, when the money had to be spread further.

5. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to time and space constraints associated with different resources. Legitimate power, for example, was operative under most conditions; rules and regulations could be committed to pieces of paper which could be utilized anywhere. Referent power, in contrast, was highly dependent upon face-to-face contacts. Expert power was most effective when it was applied continuously over extended periods of time; consultants found their brief visits to schools to be much less effective than the extended and intensive summer institutes. It may be that reward power, coercive power, and legitimate power, which tend to activate existing cognitive and affective structures, can function in a variety of contexts. Expert power and referent power, in contrast, tend to implant new cognitive and affective structures; such implantation probably requires more intensive forms of interaction in order to be effective.

6. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to the suitability of various types of power to individual schools. Some schools were

treated with considerable tact and delicacy by the state. Others were subjected to intensive state pressures. Some schools responded well to legitimate power whereas other schools were not responsive to such power.

To some extent inter-school variations in power utilization may reflect differences in the climates, or organizational personalities, of the schools. In addition, schools varied in their importance to the state; the schools which were most necessary to the success of the state program may have received different treatment than the schools which were less important to the state.

7. In control relationships the type of power resource is related to feedback about the effects of previous applications of power. The state's reporting system, for example, provided evidence about policies that were being implemented and those that were not; in the latter case new power was applied. In some cases the state found that too many negative consequences ensured from a given application of power; alternative applications then were sought.

Underlying all of these factors was a common strategy which can be characterized as "goal-directed adaptability." That is, the state continually pressed local schools to comply with state policy, but the means (power resources) utilized to obtain compliance varied widely. The principle of goal-directed adaptability suggests, on one hand, that state control is not aimless; it is purposive. On the other hand, goals are not pursued blindly; the means used to attain goals--and to some extent the goals themselves--are adapted to suit numerous constraints. In this study there was considerable evidence that commitment to flexibility was a carefully chosen strategic principle which was explicitly intended to govern the control process.

Implications

These seven propositions about the process of state control, and the five-fold typology on which they were based, constitute the major findings of this study. Obviously further studies are needed to verify the utility of the typology, and to clarify and test the propositions about the influence process. Pending such studies, I submit that the study offers some elements for a theory of state control in education. Moreover, I think it offers some conceptual tools which can be applied to the task of strengthening the power base of education agencies and to the task of helping the states use their power more efficiently and wisely.